

Evasion Laid To Kennedy By Mother Of Dead Flier

Birmingham, Ala., Feb. 26 (AP)—

A Birmingham mother who apparently lost a son in the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba bitterly accused President Kennedy today of evading questions about her son.

Mrs. Riley W. Shamburger, Sr., said the President evaded her when she wrote him about the disappearance of her son, Riley W. Shamburger, Jr.

Shamburger, 36, and three other Birmingham airmen were reported to have been killed when their cargo plane crashed into the Caribbean during the Cuban assault.

Deaths Announced

Their apparent deaths were announced at a news conference in Birmingham, May 4, 1961, by an attorney for the Double Check Corporation of Miami, Fla.

The lawyer, Alex E. Carlson, said their cargo plane had crashed in the Caribbean. He identified the four as Shamburger, Thomas Willard Ray, 29, co-pilot; Leo F. Baker, 35, engineer, and Wade Carroll Gray, 33, radioman.

In Washington, the White House said a letter Mrs. Shamburger wrote the President the latter part of 1962 was answered by his Air Force aide, Maj. Gen. Godfrey McHugh.

Andrew T. Hatcher, assistant White House press secretary, said:

"At the direction of the President, the [redacted] extended the President's heartfelt sympathy and explained that the Government had, unfortunately, no information to add to that which had been conveyed to Mrs. Shamburger before."

Report Noted

"We are informed that representatives of the organization which employed Mr. Shamburger reported her son's death, as much as is known of the circumstances, to Mrs. Shamburger in the spring of 1962."

The case was brought up again when Senator Mansfield (D-Tenn.) majority leader, advised that American volunteers had flown combat missions to the Cuban invasion.

The woman brought an angry letter to Mrs. Shamburger.



RILEY W. SHAMBURGER, JR.

that no Americans were involved.

She said she wrote the President and asked: "If no Americans were involved, where is my son?"

"Evaded My Question"

"But he evaded my question," Mrs. Shamburger said.

"I try to have hope and try to cling to it."

Mrs. Thomas Ray, wife of one of the dead crew members, said that she had been issued a death certificate. "I have about given up hope," she added.

Mrs. Ray said she often wonders exactly what happened. "I would like to get the true facts behind it all," she said. "The Government has told me nothing."

She said her husband had told her he was enlisting in a combined service school. The next word she received was from an attorney who told her of Ray's apparent death.

She said Ray had worked for Hayes International Corporation as an inspector before going to Army and Air Force flight schools. They have two children.

Mrs. Wade Gray, wife of another crewman who died, said her husband was an electronics and radio technician who had been laid off at Hayes. She said he told her he was going to work for a firm in Tennessee and that when he was last heard from, he was dead.